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VIII. *A Letter from Mr William Baxter to Dr Hans Sloane, R. S. Secr. containing an Account of a Book Intituled, Archæologia Britannica, giving some account Additional to what has hitherto been Publish'd, of the Languages, Histories and Customs of the Original Inhabitants of Great Britain : From Collections and Observations in Travels through Wales, Cornwall, Bas Bretagne, Ireland and Scotland, By Edward Lhuyd, M. A. of Jesus College, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Vol. I. Containing; 1. A Comparative Etymology ; or, Remarks on the Alteration of Languages. 2. A Latin-Celtick Dictionary : or, a Vocabulary of the Original Languages of Britain and Ireland. 3. An Armoric Grammar. 4. An Armoric - English Vocabulary. 5. Some Welsh Words omitted in Dr Davies's Dictionary. 6. A Cornish Grammar. 7. A Catalogue of British Manuscripts. 8. An Essay towards a British Etymologicon. 9. A brief Introduction to the Irish or Ancient Scottish Language. 10. An Irish-English Dictionary. Oxford, Printed at the Theatre for the Author, MDCCVII. And delivered at the Ashmolean Museum.*

I have carefully perus'd this First Volume of Mr Lhuyd's *Archæologia Britannica, or Glossography* ; and am bold to say that nothing in this kind has appeared in Publick, within my knowledge, this Century to be compared unto it ; whether we consider the Elaborateness of the Work,
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the Skill and Judgment of the Compiler, or the usefulness of it to illustrate the most Ancient part of our History ; and trace out the Original Inhabitants, and *Brigantic* and *Belgic* Colonies : Similitude of Languages, and of Rites and Religious Opinions, being by that great Author of Historiography, *Herodotus Halicarnassensis*, deservedly accounted the most established Rules for such Discoveries. The Ingenious and Learned Author has very candidly and truly represented his own undertaking in his *English Preface*, and in that curious Letter written to my Lord Bishop of *Hereford* ; to which I refer you. In his *British* Epistle to his own Country-men, he delivers his very weighty Reasons for altering the Vulgar Alphabet of the *Welsh* ; and justifies it from the Authority of Ancient M S S. and Inscriptions upon Stones in several parts of our Country. Next he Learnedly refutes the Opinion of the *Saxons* receiving their Alphabet from *Austin* the Monk, and shews that the same Characters are still extant on the Tomb-Stone of *Kaduan* King of *Gwynedd* in the Church call'd *Llan Gadwaladar* in the Isle of *Anglesey*, who was one of the *British* Princes in that Famous Battle of *Bangor is y coed* fought against those *Saxons* whom *Austin* had influenced to Massacre the *British Monks*. Indeed all the Sepulchral Inscriptions in Mr *Camden's* *Britania* abundantly prove the use of the *Roman* Alphabet in this Noble Province, from whence the Ancient *British* or (as now commonly call'd) *Saxon*, and *Irish* Alphabets are very small Deviations, unavoidably introduced by Time and the Arbitrary use of Writing. What he next proceeds to, seems much more owing to his Modesty than of any real necessity : I mean his excusing the time he employ'd in this great Undertaking ; for that may well seem to any Judicious and Impartial Peruser, to have rather been the product of an Age than of those few Years since his return from his Travels. What he says for putting those Four Languages into one Book is very reasonable ; in regard

gard none of these very Antient Dialects can be adjusted, but by being compared with the others. The *Scotish* Language (which by a large List of words in the *Basque* and *Irish* is here sufficiently demonstrated to be a branch of the Old *Spanish*) he shews to be intermixt with the Ancient *Gwydheleg* or *British-Irish*; as also that these *Gwydhelians* were the most Ancient Colonies of *Galls* here, and probably forced by the Ancestors of the *Britans* into *Scotland* and *Ireland*; the *Picts* being by the *British* Writers term'd *Guydhyl Fichtied*; and *Irish* words such as *Uygl*, *Ban*, *Lhuch*, *Drim*, &c. still continuing to be Names of *British* Rivers and Mountains: as also numbers of words (such as *Corlan*, *Blith* and the like) in the present *British*, whose Etymologies are only found in the *Guydhelian* or *Irish* Dialect, now disguised by the *Scotic*. This *Guydhelian* Tongue he Learnedly proves from Ancient *Celtic* words, and Names of Places in the *Roman Geography*, to have been also the Language of *Gaul*. For my own part, I must confess, I look upon our *British* (the Origin whereof he defers till another occasion) to be a Branch of that Antient *Belgic*, that was spoken by the *Galli Senones*, who possess'd all the lower parts of *Germany*, until the Invasion of the *Kimerian Saxons* or *Kimbrians* from the *Palus Maotis*, whence our *Celto-Scythæ*, or present *Germans*, of which see *Possidonius* in *Strabo*. Lastly, he does not only prove by the Authority of the *Triades*, (a small *British* Tract written according to the Judgment of that most Learned Antiquary Mr *Robert Vaughan* of *Hengurt* about a Thousand Years ago) that there was a very numerous Colony made in very early Times out of Great *Britain* into *Vasconia*; but also confirms by a large Catalogue of *British* words in the present *Gasgoin*, the mixture of both People, even there as well as in *Ireland*. His *Comparative Etymology* is so Methodically, Artfully, and Judiciously digested, so admirably projected by the best Canons as well of

Critique

Critique as of Grammar, that it recommends its self *prima Facie* to the nicest Palate, and sufficiently provides it self against disingenuous Cavillers. His *Harmonicon* in Latin, British and Irish is a Noble *Promptuarium* of all the British Dialects ; a Work of much Labour and Judgment, and which cannot but be acceptable to the Curious in Foreign Countries. It were indeed to be wish'd the whole were translated into *Latin* ; Scholars abroad having generally a greater Curiosity this way than as yet we seem to have in *England*. Father *Julian Manoir's* *Armoric* Grammar is a valuable Curiosity, and illustrates the Work ; It having scarce been ever heard of in our Country ; and the *Armoric Dictionary* added to it, supplies in a great measure the defect of the *Cornish* one promised in the next Volume. In the *Cornish Grammar* our Judicious Author seems to excel himself. You have there the History of our British Alphabets nicely and accurately handled, with a very Curious and Diverting variety of things. You have also a considerable Supplement to Dr *Davies's* Learned Dictionary. He has infinitely obliged the Ancient *Britans* of *Cornwal* by preserving their Language to Posterity, when just expiring. I cannot omit saying thus much of that Noble Dialect of the British ; that it appears as capable of Artful Management and Grammar Rules, as the most refined Languages : Indeed the *Celtic* Tongues in general seem to have been very Anciently refined, and I question not the truth of what is hinted in that incomparable Letter of our Author to the Lord Bishop of *Hereford*, that they were the very Ground-work of *Greek* and *Latin* Grammars ; not only the *Cantabrian* or *Scotic* part of our Irish, but even the Noble *Teutonic* Dialects themselves so Learnedly recommended by the incomparable Dr *Hicks* in his late *Thesaurus*, seeming but defective if compar'd as to Art and Variety with our British. The Learned World will therefore the less wonder if Father *Molloy* was able to perform so little of the Grammarian's part

in his *Irish Grammar*. The Declensions of *Nouns* and *Pronouns* I must own to be mostly upon the *British Plan*; but the Verb, which is the Ground-work or Basis of every regular Tongue, seems, as in all uncultivated Languages, wild and unaccountable. In the *Catalogue of British MSS.* our Author has consulted the Reader's time by composing it in the Order of Alphabet, with Abbreviations directing to the *Studies* where they may be seen at present; and also his advantage by distinguishing always betwixt Tracts and single Papers, and betwixt perfect Treatises and imperfect; giving a more particular account of such pieces as seem'd to deserve it, and dismissing the useless Poets of the two last Centuries with only the bare mentioning them. Nor has he shew'd more Industry and Judgment in this and the other Titles of this Work than has been (for the extent of it) successfully imitated by his Ingenious Fellow-Traveller Mr *Parry* in his Excellent *Essay towards a British Etymologicon*, where he has Modestly parallell'd the greatest part of the British Radicals with those words that seem'd agreeable therewith in any other Language; without pretending to determine the point of Precedency as to Antiquity, which has been too much the boldness of the late Learned *Monsieur Pezron*, and indeed of most other Etymologists. The *Irish Focloir* or *Dictionary* so industriously compiled by our Learned Antiquary, and supply'd with a large Appendix of omitted words from *Scotland* and *Ireland*, cannot (besides the great Service it must needs contribute to the Inhabitants of those Countries) but be judg'd of considerable use to Criticks in the *British* and *Celtic*; The *Gnydhelian* part of that Language, being that which was spoken by the most Ancient Colony of the *Celts* in this Iland, and consequently containing the Etymologies of vast Numbers of British Derivations and Compounds otherwise not to be accounted for.

The singular Generosity of those amongst the Nobility and Gentry who have so liberally contributed to the Expences of the Author's Travels, in order to qualify him for so uncommon an Undertaking, has (as you know very well) besides their Names prefix'd to this Volume, been gratefully acknowledg'd in the Preface of a Latin Book publish'd during his Travels. Nor can indeed so laudable an Act be ever too much celebrated, there being no other Method of rendering one capable of such a Task, but those Travels through the remotest parts of *Britain* and *Ireland*, which he has upon that Encouragement so successfully perform'd.

One would think that in this Learned and Curious Age nothing need be urg'd as to the usefulness of preserving in Writing these Original Languages of *Britain* and *Ireland*. But yet so subject is Humane Nature to prejudice, and so apt to entertain the easie Humour of Jestings, rather than that more Thoughtful one of considering Subjects, and examining them; that I find a great many Gentlemen, otherwise very sensible and Ingenious, are at a loss herein. The use of committing to Writing these now almost Antiquated Languages is what the Author has truly hinted in his Dedication and Prefaces: Namely the tracing out of the Original Inhabitants of these parts of Europe; The Interpretation of the Names of Persons and Places in the Roman History and Geography, not only of *Gaul*, *Britain* and *Ireland*, but in a great measure also of *Italy* and *Spain*; The Improvement of such Works of Learned and deservedly Eminent Men as the Etymological Dictionaries of *Vossius* and *Menage*; the explaining such passages in the Greek and Latin Writers as relate to the Rites and Manners of the *Gauls*, *Britains*, &c. by a diligent perusal of the Ancient Poets, and such others of the Oldest Writers as are extant in these Languages. As for such as shall answer, that tho all this should be granted, yet still these are but trifling and useless

less Disquisitions; 'tis plain they speak so unlike Scholars, as not to require any further Reply.

I cannot conclude without taking Notice of one Calumny that has been whisper'd about by Men of Passion or Intreague, *viz.* That this Book is design'd to serve a certain Interest. I therefore think my self oblig'd in Justice, to certify to the Publick, that after a careful perusal of all the Parts of this Work, I cannot discern a Syllable any where that in the least tends to favour any Party, or is any way concern'd in any National Distinction; and that the Author every where discovers himself a Man of Candor and above Partiality. I have not, I confess, had the Happiness of a Personal Acquaintance with him, but I presume I may, as our Blessed Saviour directs, *Judge of a Tree by its Fruit.*

L O N D O N

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